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THE NEW MUTANTS™

MANDRAKE

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The New Mutants STARS

CREATED BY CHRIS CLAREMONT & BOB McLEOD

Scaredy Cat!

THE BEST TIME FOR CASTING SPELLS IS VERY EARLY IN THE MORNING, WHEN EVERYONE'S ASLEEP AND NOT LIKELY TO NOTICE.

THE SAFEST PLACE IS YOUR OWN ROOM.

ILLYANA RASPUTIN'S FELLOW STUDENTS AT PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS DON'T KNOW SHE CAN DO THIS.

SHE MEANS TO KEEP IT THAT WAY.

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THIS IS ONE OF THE SIMPLER ENCHANTMENTS; AS, PROTECTED BY A MAGIC CIRCLE...

...ILLYANA SEPARATES HER ASTRAL FORM FROM ITS PHYSICAL SHELL...

...AND SLIPS OUT OF THE HOUSE.

FOR HER, TIME AND DISTANCE NOW MEAN NOTHING...

SHE CAN TRAVEL ANYWHERE ON EARTH IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, PASSING THROUGH WALLS--INDEED, THROUGH VIRTUALLY ANY OBSTACLE, NO MATTER HOW SOLID--AS EASILY AS AIR.

SHE TURNS NORTH AND EAST, TOWARDS THE BERKSHIRE MOUNTAINS.

KITTY PROMISED SHE'D TELEPHONE AS SOON AS SHE AND HER FRIEND, DOUG RAMSEY, ARRIVED AT THE MASSACHUSETTS ACADEMY.

BUT WE HAVEN'T HEARD A WORD FROM HER-- AND NOW, THE X-MEN HAVE DISAPPEARED AS WELL.

* SEE X-MEN #180 AND THE SECRET WAR FOR DETAILS--L.

SHE MAY SIMPLY HAVE FORGOTTEN, SHE'S DONE IT BEFORE. BUT IT WON'T HURT TO MAKE CERTAIN EVERYTHING'S ALL RIGHT.

THERE'S SNOW VALLEY.

ACCORDING TO KITTY, THE SCHOOL IS ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN.

SHE HATED THE PLACE. IF NOT FOR DOUG'S ASKING HER TO GO WITH HIM, SHE WOULDN'T HAVE COME ANYWHERE NEAR IT.

SHE HAD GOOD REASON.

IT LOOKS SO PEACEFUL AND BEAUTIFUL, A STORYBOOK CAMPUS.

ITS FACADE IS AS DECEPTIVE AS MY OWN.

THE WOMAN WHO RUNS THIS SCHOOL--

--EMMA FROST-- IS THE WHITE QUEEN OF THE HELLFIRE CLUB...

... A SECRET SOCIETY WHOSE GOAL IS TO RULE THE WORLD.

SO STRANGE-- SHE AND HER COMRADES ARE FABULOUSLY WEALTHY...

...ONE WOULD THINK THEY'D BE CONTENT WITH THAT.

BUT POWER IS AN ADDICTIVE DRUG-- I KNOW FROM EXPERIENCE--

--THE MORE YOU HAVE, THE MORE YOU WANT.

THIS IS THE SECRET COMPLEX BENEATH THE SCHOOL THAT KITTY AND ORORO TOLD ME ABOUT.

AND THERE'S KITTY!

YOU WON'T GET AWAY WITH THIS!

I WAS RIGHT TO BE CONCERNED, SHE'S IN A MESS! THAT'S THE WHITE QUEEN!

FAIT ACCOMPLI, DEAR HEART. IT'S ALREADY DONE.

YOU ARE TRAPPED HERE WITHOUT THE POWER TO PHASE.

POOR KITTY. FIRST SHE WAS KIDNAPPED BY THE MORLOCKS*, AND NOW THIS-- I ONLY HOPE I CAN BE OF SOME USE.

RAGE ALL YOU WISH, KATHERINE. RESIST WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT-- I ENJOY A GOOD MATCH WITH A WORTHY FOE-- BUT WHEN IT'S OVER, WHEN I'VE FINISHED WITH YOU...

*SEE X-MEN #178 & 179 -- L.

...YOU WON'T EVER WANT TO LEAVE ME, WON'T THAT BE NICE?

IF YOUR TEAM-MATES WERE COMING TO YOUR RESCUE...

THE X-MEN--!

...WOULDN'T THEY HAVE DONE SO BY NOW?

DOUG RAMSEY'LL CALL THE POLICE!

WHY SHOULD HE?

A HOLOGRAM -- IT'S DOUG!

TO HIM, YOU'RE NOT MISSING.

I'LL PLACE YOU IN RAPPORT WITH HIM...

...SO THAT YOU CAN SEE THROUGH HIS EYES.

IT'S CHILDS'-PLAY, REALLY. I TELEPATHICALLY MANIPULATE HIS PERCEPTIONS SO THAT HE BELIEVES YOU'RE BY HIS SIDE. THE ILLUSION IS PERFECT BECAUSE *HE* SUPPLIES THE DETAILS. YOU LOOK AS HE IMAGINES YOU SHOULD...

...AND SPEAK AND BEHAVE THE SAME. IN REALITY, THE POOR BOY TALKS TO HIMSELF AND, AS YOU CAN SEE, EMBRACES NOTHING.

THE FACT THAT HE LOVES YOU MAKES MY TASK INFINITELY EASIER.

LOVE?

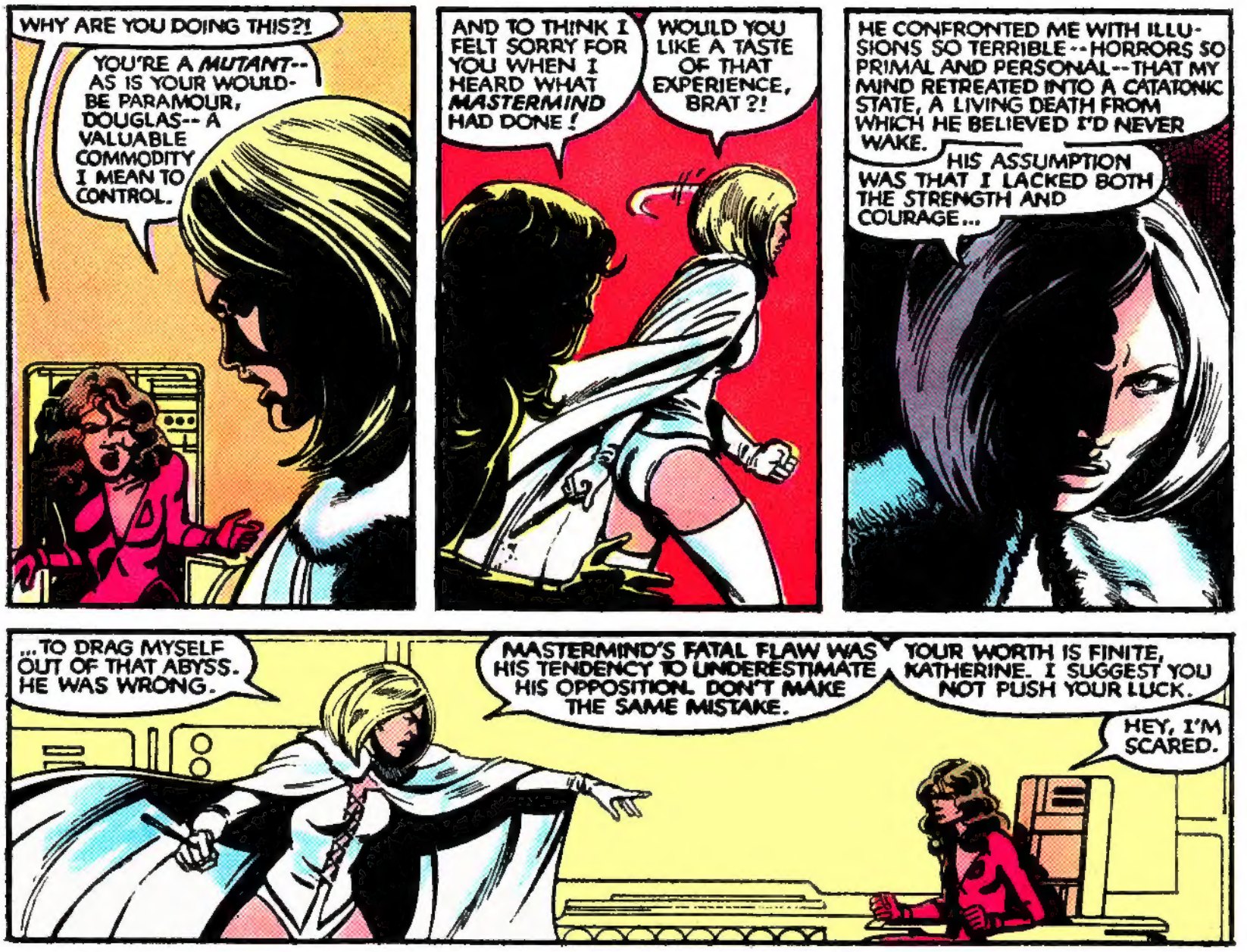
YOU'RE *LYING!*

IF YOU INSIST.

HE'D DENY IT, OF COURSE, AS FERVENTLY AS YOU'RE NOW DENYING YOUR FEELINGS FOR HIM.

HE'S A FRIEND, NOTHING MORE!

KATHERINE, I THOUGHT YOU KNEW BETTER THAN TO TRY TO DECEIVE A MIND-READER.


WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?!
YOU'RE A MUTANT-- AS IS YOUR WOULD-BE PARAMOUR, DOUGLAS-- A VALUABLE COMMODITY I MEAN TO CONTROL.
AND TO THINK I FELT SORRY FOR YOU WHEN I HEARD WHAT MASTERMIND HAD DONE!
WOULD YOU LIKE A TASTE OF THAT EXPERIENCE, BRAT?!
HE CONFRONTED ME WITH ILLUSIONS SO TERRIBLE--HORRORS SO PRIMAL AND PERSONAL--THAT MY MIND RETREATED INTO A CATATONIC STATE, A LIVING DEATH FROM WHICH HE BELIEVED I'D NEVER WAKE.
HIS ASSUMPTION WAS THAT I LACKED BOTH THE STRENGTH AND COURAGE...
...TO DRAG MYSELF OUT OF THAT ABYSS. HE WAS WRONG.
MASTERMIND'S FATAL FLAW WAS HIS TENDENCY TO UNDERESTIMATE HIS OPPOSITION. DON'T MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE.
YOUR WORTH IS FINITE, KATHERINE. I SUGGEST YOU NOT PUSH YOUR LUCK.
HEY, I'M SCARED.
I KNOW...
...BUT IT'S A NICE ACT.
NOW THAT I'VE TAKEN A MOMENT TO REGAIN MY TEMPER, SHALL I MAKE YOU AN OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE?
ONLY IF YOU WANT A REAL RUDE SUGGESTION ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH IT.
WHAT DELIGHTFULLY INVENTIVE THOUGHTS! KATHERINE, YOU'VE A STREAK OF PURE NASTINESS IN YOU THAT RIVALS MY OWN!
YOU'D ENJOY BELONGING TO THE HELLFIRE CLUB.
NOT A CHANCE.

I'VE GOT TO KEEP MYSELF UNDER CONTROL. THE MORE UPSET I GET, THE HARDER IT BECOMES...

...TO MAINTAIN THE PSYCHIC DEFENSES PROFESSOR XAVIER TAUGHT ME.

THEY WON'T DO YOU ANY GOOD, EVEN THEN.

SHUT UP! GET OUT OF MY MIND! LEAVE ME ALONE!

MAKE ME.

WITCH! IF I COULD GET MY HANDS ON YOU!

BUT YOU CAN'T. YOU ARE COMPLETELY AT MY MERCY-- AS ARE YOUR *PARENTS*.

WHAT D'YOU MEAN?

I CAN DO A GREAT DEAL, KATHERINE-- TO THEM, OR FOR THEM. I CAN GRANT THEM WEALTH, POWER--ANYTHING THEIR GREEDY HEARTS DESIRE--

--OR I CAN CRUSH THEM AS UTTERLY AS MASTERMIND TRIED TO DO ME.

WOULD YOU SEE YOUR PARENTS PENNILESS-- STARVING, HOMELESS, IN RAGS, TOTALLY WITHOUT HOPE? ARE YOU THAT CRUEL?

YOU CAN'T.

TRY ME.

THAT ISN'T FAIR--*GASP!*

KITTY *SAW* ME! BUT HOW-- *uh-oh!*

I CAN SENSE THE WHITE QUEEN'S PSI-POWERS-- SHE CAN SEE ME, TOO!

A SPY-- COLOSSUS' BABY *SISTER!* I'LL SOON BE RID OF HER!

ILLYANA-- RUN!!

TOO LATE!

AND...

DANIELLE MOONSTAR.

RAHNE SINCLAIR.

SAM GUTHRIE.

ROBERTO DaCOSTA.

AMARA AQUILLA.

THAT WAS A *SCREAM!*

I'VE NE'ER HEARD ANYTHING SO FRIGHTFUL!

IT CAME FROM THE *X-MEN'S* WING OF THE MANSION!

ILLYANA'S THE ONLY ONE THERE!

HER BEDROOM DOOR'S LOCKED--

-- BUT NOT FOR LONG!

ILLYANA-- YOU...

... OKAY!?!

HECATE-- A DEMON!
WHERE'D IT COME FROM?!
WHO CARES-- WHERE'S IT GOIN'?!!
BLASTED ROBE! IT CANNA CHANGE SHAPE AS I DO-- I'M ALL TANGLED UP!
ILLYANA?!
LORD HAVE MERCY--THOSE CREATURES ARE COMIN' OUTTA HER!
DANI, LOOK, THAT WITCHY CIRCLE ON THE FLOOR-- WAS SHE CASTIN' SOME SORT'A SPELL?!
DUCK!
THE MONSTERS ARE MAKIN' A BREAK FOR IT!
GO AFTER THEM! DON'T LET THEM GET OUT OF THE HOUSE!
I'LL TRY TO HELP ILLYANA!
THE GUYS'RE SURE TAKING OFF IN A HURRY.
CAN'T SAY I BLAME THEM, EITHER. I'D GIVE ANYTHING TO BE ON THEIR SIDE OF THE DOOR.
MY *GRAND-FATHER* WAS A WISE MAN, HE'D HAVE KNOWN WHAT TO DO HERE. I HAVEN'T A CLUE-- BUT ILLYANA'S IN AGONY.
I CAN'T STAND BY AND LET HER SUFFER.

THERE'S A COUPLE IN THE FRONT HALL!

I'LL CATCH--

WHULP?!?

OWW!

ROAR!

YYIII!!

THESE MONSTERS SEEM ABLE TO CHANGE SIZE AT WILL-- ONE SECOND THEY'RE SMALL, THE NEXT *GIANTS!*

*HEEDLESS OF HIS OWN SAFETY, THE YOUNG BRAZILIAN CHARGES TO THE RESCUE-- SHIFTING AS HE GOES INTO THE SUPER-STRONG, SOLAR-POWERED FORM OF **SUNSPOT.***

HE THROWS A HAYMAKER PUNCH THAT WOULD HAVE STAGGERED THE HULK. UNFORTUNATELY...

IT *VANISHED*-- THE INSTANT I TOUCHED IT!

THE FORCE OF MY PUNCH--

--THROWING ME OFF-BALANCE--!

BERTOHH!

UPSTAIRS, CANNONBALL BLASTS AFTER HIS QUARRY

LIKE RAHNE AND ROBERTO, HE EXPECTS THE CREATURES TO PUT UP A FIGHT.

HE'S SO SURPRISED TO DISCOVER HOW FRAGILE THEY TRULY ARE...

...THAT HE FORGETS ALL ABOUT THE WINDOW AT THE END OF THE CORRIDOR...

...UNTIL HE CRASHES THROUGH IT.

SAM, WE WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO LET THIS HAPPEN!

GIMME A BREAK, AMARA, AH DIDN'T DO IT ON PURPOSE!

NICE SHOOTIN', GIRL!

FIGURES. MY POWERS APPEARED LONG BEFORE HERS...

...BUT SHE HANDLES HER LAVA BLASTS LIKE A PRO...

...WHILE I'M LUCKY AH CAN MAKE A LOUSY TURN. HOW COME IT'S SO HARD FOR ME? IT AIN'T AS IF AH DON'T *TRY*-- AH DO WHAT TH' PROFESSOR ASKS AN' MORE -- BUT THE OTHERS GET BETTER...

...AN' AH PRETTY MUCH STAY THE SAME.

MEANWHILE...

LOOKS LIKE THE DEMONS DON'T WANT ME...

...COMING ANYWHERE NEAR ILLYANA. THE ROOM'S SO DARK AND CLUTTERED I CAN'T AFFORD ANY FANCY MOVES.

I'D BETTER BULL STRAIGHT THROUGH THE MIDDLE-- BY MY ANCESTORS!

I HIT THEM...

...AND THEY VANISH!

SO MANY-- THEIR TOUCH STINGS!

THEY'RE TURNING ME AROUND-- CONFUSING ME!

CAN'T SEE WHERE I'M GOING-- LOSING MY BALANCE--

OHWW!=

HEAD... HIT SOMETHING HARD-- IT... HURTS!

MONSTERS--CRAWLING ALL OVER ME-- CAN FEEL CLAWS... TEETH-- THEY'LL TEAR ME APART-- EAT ME ALIVE!!

IN DESPERATION, DANI UNLEASHES THE FULL FORCE OF HER OWN MUTANT POWER, PULLING FROM THE DEMONS' TINY MINDS THE IMAGE OF WHAT THEY FEAR MOST...

... AND THEN CREATING A REAL-AS-LIFE SIMULACRUM OF IT BEFORE THEM.

THE FIGURE IS ILLYANA.

SO TERRIFIED ARE THE DEMONS THAT, RATHER THAN FACE HER, THEY INSTANTLY DISCORPORATE...

... LEAVING DANI HOVERING ON THE THRESHOLD OF OBLIVION, BARELY CONSCIOUS, TRYING TO KEEP A TIGHT HOLD OF REALITY...

... AND CERTAIN SHE'S LOSING...

... AS SHE WATCHES HER CONJURATION STRIDE TOWARDS HER...

...THEN CARRY HER TO THE BED AND GENTLY LAY HER DOWN.

CAN'T BE -- MY SPIRIT-FORMS HAVE NO SUBSTANCE. THEY'RE IMAGES -- ILLUSIONS -- NOTHING MORE.

BUT IF IT WAS ILLYANA -- WHY DID I SEE HER AS A SORCERESS?

HER FIGURE WAS GROWN-UP -- SO TERRIBLY... EVIL -- ILLYANA... ISN'T...

THANKS FOR THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE, DANI.

I WISH IT WAS DESERVED.

I FEEL AWFUL.

DON'T TRY TO MOVE JUST YET -- YOU HIT YOUR HEAD AGAINST THE BUREAU. YOU'LL HAVE A ROYAL GOOSE-EGG IN THE MORNING.

WHAT ABOUT THE OTHERS?

WE'RE FINE, DANI.

BUT WE'VE GOT SOME QUESTIONS FOR ILLYANA.

A LITTLE LATER, IN THE KITCHEN...

WE'RE WAITIN', GIRL!

SAM, SHE ISN'T AN ENEMY!

YOU POSITIVE?

I AM NOT MERELY A MUTANT. I AM A *SORCERESS* AS WELL.

GEE, WE NEVER WOULD HAVE GUESSED.

SMART-ALECK.

EVERY CHANCE I GET.

WHY WERE YOU CASTING A SPELL, ILLYANA? WHAT MADE IT GO WRONG?

I WAS CONCERNED ABOUT KITTY-- SO I SENT MY ASTRAL FORM AFTER HER TO SEE HOW SHE WAS DOING. I DISCOVERED THAT SHE'S A PRISONER OF THE *HELLFIRE CLUB* AND THEIR *WHITE QUEEN*, WHO THE X-MEN BELIEVED WAS STILL IN A COMA...

... IS AS HEALTHY-- AND NASTY-- AS EVER.

SHE'S TRYING TO FORCE KITTY TO RENOUNCE THE X-MEN. KITTY'S TOUGH-- AND STUBBORN-- BUT THE QUEEN'S A TELEPATH, POSSIBLY ON A PAR WITH PROFESSOR XAVIER HIMSELF. KITTY WON'T BE ABLE TO HOLD OUT FOR LONG. EVENTUALLY, THE QUEEN WILL PICK HER BRAIN APART BIT BY BIT.

HER PSI-POWERS SENSED MY ASTRAL PRESENCE AND SHE DISRUPTED IT WITH A MINDBLAST. THE BACKLASH STUNNED ME AND ALLOWED MY PSYCHIC FAMILIARS TO GET LOOSE.

THEY AREN'T VERY DANGEROUS-- DESPITE THEIR LOOKS. I REALLY APPRECIATE YOUR CATCHING THEM.

I JUST REMEMBERED-- KITTY SAW ME THE MOMENT BEFORE MISS FROST DID. BUT MY ASTRAL BODY'S INVISIBLE TO MORTAL EYES. WHAT COULD THAT MEAN?

ANYWAY, KITTY'S IN SERIOUS TROUBLE, AND I MEAN TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. SHE'S DONE AS MUCH -- AND MORE-- FOR ME.

THE PROF'S RULES ARE, WHENEVER HE OR THE X-MEN AREN'T AROUND IN AN EMERGENCY, WE SHOULD TURN TO EITHER THE *FANTASTIC FOUR* OR THE *AVENGERS*.

WHO WANTS TO PLACE THE CALL?

I WONDER IF I CAN GET THEIR AUTOGRAPHS-- NOT FOR ME, OF COURSE, FOR MY LITTLE SISTER.

RIIIIGHT.

FANTASTIC FOUR INCORPORATED, GOOD MORNING.

I'M VERY SORRY, YOUNG MAN, BUT THE FF ARE NOT CURRENTLY IN RESIDENCE. MAY I TAKE A MESSAGE?

DEAR ME, I DO WISH THE AVENGERS COULD BE OF ASSISTANCE, BUT THEY'VE DISAPPEARED! I FEAR THEY MAY HAVE RUN AFOUL OF SOME VILLAIN.*

*INDEED THEY HAVE. FOR DETAILS, SEE THE SECRET WAR #1—LOUISE.

THE X-MEN, THE AVENGERS AND THE FF-- ALL VANISH ON THE SAME NIGHT?! THIS IS *SCARY!!!*

WHY?

IT MEANS SOMEONE'S KIDNAPPED THE MOST POWERFUL SUPER-GROUPS ON EARTH.

AH HATE T'SAY IT, BUT KITTY MAY HAVE JUST RUN OUTTA LUCK.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, SAM-- WE HAVEN'T BEEN KIDNAPPED!

ILLYANA, WE'RE KIDS!

YOU DON'T SEND HIGH SCHOOL VARSITY-- NO MATTER HOW GOOD-- UP AGAINST THE PITTSBURGH STEELERS. IT'S SUICIDE!

IF POSITIONS WERE REVERSED, KITTY WOULD COME TO YOUR AID -- WITHOUT A MOMENT'S HESITATION!

BUT I WON'T FORCE YOU. STAY BEHIND IF YOU WISH, I'LL DO THE JOB MYSELF!

ILLYANA, *WAIT!*

THIS IS A QUESTION OF *HONOR!* REGARDLESS OF OUR FEELINGS FOR KITTY, SHE IS A SCHOOL-MATE -- WE ARE DUTY-BOUND TO AID HER!

THANK YOU, AMARA.

SNOW VALLEY'S A LONG WAY FROM HERE, LADIES -- HOW'RE WE S'POSED TO GET THERE?

AH DON'T KNOW IF MY FLYIN' POWER HAS THAT KINDA RANGE -- 'SPECIALLY IF AH'M CARRYIN' PASSENGERS -- OR HOW LONG AH'LL HAVE TO REST UP IF AH RUN OUTTA GAS.

MY CONTROL OVER MY TELEPORTING ABILITY IS STILL TOO HAPHAZARD. WE SHOULDN'T RISK USING IT UNLESS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY.

THEY LOOK SO RELIEVED. HOW LONG WILL THEY REMAIN SCARED OF ME -- AND... WILL KITTY AND THE X-MEN FEEL THE SAME?

NONE OF US ARE QUALIFIED TO FLY THE X-MEN'S PLANES -- ANYONE HAVE A DRIVER'S LICENSE?

SAM KNOWS HOW TO DRIVE. WE COULD TAKE A CAR...

BETTER NOT, DANI. KIDS CRUISING IN A ROLLS-ROYCE IS A SURE GUARANTEE OF BEING STOPPED. WITHOUT LICENSES, HOW WOULD WE EXPLAIN OURSELVES?

STEVIE HUNTER'S AWAY ON VACATION...

"...SO WE CAN'T TURN TO HER. I SUGGEST WE CRACK OPEN OUR PIGGY-BANKS. THEN WE'LL SEE WHERE -- AND HOW -- WE GO FROM THERE."

WELL?

BUS FARE -- WITH A LITTLE LEFT OVER FOR EXPENSES.

NOW THAT'S GLAMOROUS.

WHAT'D YOU EXPECT, SAM? IF WE'RE GONNA BE SUPER-HEROES...

...THEN WE OUGHTTA TRAVEL IN SUPER-HERO STYLE!

THE PORT AUTHORITY BUS TERMINAL. ONE BLOCK WEST AND SOUTH OF TIMES SQUARE. NEAR THE END OF THE MORNING RUSH HOUR...

PORT AUTHORITY BUS TERMIN

ARE THERE ALWAYS SUCH CROWDS, SAM?

PRETTY MUCH, 'MARA. THIS WAS THE FIRST PLACE I SAW IN NEW YORK WHEN I CAME NORTH TO JOIN THE NEW MUTANTS. I FREAKED -- I'D NEVER SEEN SO MANY PEOPLE --AH DARN NEAR TURNED TAIL AND SKEDADDLED BACK TO KENTUCKY.

WE'RE ALL SET! THE BUS LEAVES IN AN HOUR -- SAM, WHERE ARE 'BERTO AND RAHNE?!

Hmnh?

TICKETS

THEY WERE STANDIN' RIGHT-- DANI, THE ESCALATOR!

THEY'RE HEADIN' FOR THE OBSERVATION DECK!

BOBBY -- WHY'D YOU TAKE OFF, FELLA?

RAHNE? RAHNE?!

"SAM, DO YOU SEE WHAT THEY'RE LOOKING AT -- THE *HOLY GHOST CHURCH!*

"REMEMBER WHO WE *MET* THERE LAST SUMMER--

--AND WHAT HAPPENED TO THE KIDS?!

YEAH -- DANI, THEY'RE COMIN' OUT OF THEIR TRANCE!

GOODNESS! HOW'D WE GET OUT HERE?!

YOU TELL US.

SOMETHING... *CALLED* TO US. WE COULDN'T RESIST -- WE DIDN'T WANT TO -- ANSWERING THAT SUMMONS SUDDENLY BECAME THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN OUR LIVES.

I WONDER, DID 'BERTO FEEL WHAT I DID -- A TERRIBLE, ANIMAL HUNGER...

...FOR *BLOOD?!* OH MERCIFUL GOD, WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?!?

THE BRUCKNER EXPRESSWAY, EN ROUTE UPSTATE TOWARDS THE CONNECTICUT BORDER.

SURPRISINGLY, FOR THE HEIGHT OF THE SKI SEASON...

...THE MUTANTS HAVE THE BUS VIRTUALLY TO THEMSELVES.

RAHNE HASN'T TAKEN HER EYES OFF ME SINCE WE CLIMBED ABOARD. TO HER, I MUST SEEM LIKE THE DEVIL INCARNATE. WHO KNOWS, PERHAPS I AM.

I NE'ER HAD SUCH FOUL AND DISGUSTING THOUGHTS 'TIL *SHE* JOINED US. BUT HOW CAN I FIGHT SUCH POWER --WHEN I FEAR *I'M* EVIL, TOO?!

WHAT'CHA READIN'?

PRINT-OUTS FROM THE MANSION'S COMPUTER LIBRARY. WE NEED EVERY SCRAP OF INFORMATION WE CAN GET ABOUT THE HELLFIRE CLUB AND MISS FROST'S SCHOOL.

SMART. YOU'RE A BETTER LEADER THAN AH AM, DANI.

IT WASN'T MY IDEA, SAM, IT JUST WORKED OUT THAT WAY.

AH'M WORRIED ABOUT RAHNE AN' BOBBY. THAT CHURCH IS *CLOAK AN' DAGGER'S* HIDEOUT. THE KIDS WERE INJECTECTED WITH THE SAME DRUG...

"...THAT CREATED CLOAK AN' HIS LADY, EXCEPT IT TURNED THEM INTO MONSTER VERSIONS OF THEMSELVES. CLOAK AN' DAGGER USED THEIR OWN POWERS TO ABSORB THE POISONS FROM THE KIDS' BODIES. *

*AS CHRONICLED IN MTU ANNUAL #6 --LOUISE.

WE THOUGHT THEY WERE CURED-- BUT WHAT IF WE WERE WRONG?

THAT'S FOR THE PROFESSOR TO DEAL WITH, SAM.

BUT HE'S GONE, AND THE X-MEN WITH HIM! WHO KNOWS WHEN--OR EVEN IF-- HE'S COMIN' BACK?! WE MAY HAVE TO HANDLE THIS OURSELVES.

WE'VE GOT MORE IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS, PAL. THE HELLFIRE CLUB NUMBER AMONG THE X-MEN'S DEADLIEST FOES. WE CAN'T AFFORD TO FLY OFF HALF-COCKED OR DO OUR USUAL MADCAP SOLO TURNS. WE HAVE TO WORK AS A TEAM AND NOT MAKE A SINGLE MISTAKE.

OTHERWISE, WE'LL GET SLAUGHTERED.

SHOOT, GIRL, WE'LL PROBABLY GET SLAUGHTERED ANYWAY!

BEFORE WE LEFT THE MANSION THIS MORNING, WE TRIED TO RUN A HELLFIRE CLUB COMBAT SEQUENCE IN THE DANGER ROOM -- SO WE'D HAVE AT LEAST SOME IDEA OF WHAT TO EXPECT -- BUT THE COMPUTER REJECTED THE PROGRAM.

IT SAID IT WAS AN X-MEN LEVEL EXERCISE, FAR TOO DANGEROUS FOR NOVICES LIKE US AN' CONSEQUENTLY NOT ALLOWED.

"CRIPES, IF PRACTICE IS TOO TOUGH FOR US TO, EVEN TRY, WHAT'LL THE REAL THING BE LIKE?!

"BOBBY'S HAVIN' A GREAT TIME SHOWIN' 'MARA THE SIGHTS. AH SHOULD BE JEALOUS -- BUT AH'M TOO SCARED. THE CLUB HAS AN EDGE IN AGE, SIZE, EXPERIENCE.

ON T'OTHER HAND, WE'LL HAVE SURPRISE ON OUR SIDE -- AN' THEY HAVE NO IDEA OF WHAT ILLYANA AN' AMARA CAN DO. BE REAL LONG ODDS BUT, WHO KNOWS. WE MIGHT GET LUCKY.

HEY, RAHNE, WHY THE GRIM FACE? THE BUS CAN'T BE THAT UN-COMFORTABLE.

HUSH, SAM, SHE'LL HEAR YOU!

WHO, ILLYANA? SO WHAT IF SHE DOES?

SAM, SHE'S A WITCH!

BIG DEAL, YOU'RE A WEREWOLF.

D'YOU NOT THINK I *KNOW* WHAT I AM! SHE AND I'RE TWO OF A KIND -- WITCH AN' WERE-THING -- SPAWN OF *SATAN!*

HOLD IT, CHILD, DON'T YOU PULL THAT LINE ON ME!

THE FIRST BOOK MY DADDY TAUGHT ME TO READ WAS THE *BIBLE* -- AH WAS ATTENDIN' SUNDAY SCHOOL LONG B'FORE YOU WERE EVEN BORN -- AN' AH'LL WAGER MY BELIEFS ARE AS STRONG AS YOURS.

IF YOU'RE TELLIN' ME YOU'RE EVIL, SIMPLY 'CAUSE O' WHAT YOU ARE, AH SAY THAT'S *BULL!*

MY MINISTER'D SAY DIFFERENT.

WHAT'S HE KNOW?

SAM, DINNA BLASPHEME!

HE'S A HUMAN BEING, RAHNE, LIKE YOU AN' ME! IT ISN'T FOR US TO UNDERSTAND THE LORD'S ACTIONS OR DESIGN. THAT ISN'T POSSIBLE.

I MEAN, WHERE'S HIS MERCY IN WAR AN' DISEASE AN' HATRED? WHY'D MY DADDY HAVE TO COUGH HIS LUNGS AND LIFE OUT YEARS BEFORE HIS TIME? HE WAS A GOOD, DECENT MAN--HE DIDN'T DESERVE SO CRUEL A DEATH.

GOD THOUGHT DIFFERENT, AH GUESS.

YOU CAN'T SECOND-GUESS HIM, CHILD. HE'LL JUDGE YOU IN HIS OWN TIME, HIS OWN WAY--TILL THEN, YOU DO THE BEST YOU CAN WITH WHAT YOU GOT. MUTANT IS A LABEL, LIKE "COLORED" USED TO BE. IT DOESN'T MATTER. WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS HOW YOU LIVE YOUR LIFE.

GIVE YOURSELF A CHANCE, RAHNE--AN' THEN, GIVE ILLYANA THE SAME.

DID YOU KNOW, SAM, MY MUM DIED IN CHILD-BIRTH?

WHEN HE WAS MOST ANGRY WITH ME, REVEREND CRAIG WOULD SAY IT WAS MY FAULT, A SIGN OF THE LORD'S DISPLEASURE AT MY MOTHER'S LIFE...

...AN'... AN MY CREATION. IT FELL TO ME, HE'D SAY, TO ATONE FOR HER SINS, AN' SAVE HER FROM THE PIT.

HOW CAN I DO THAT, SAM, IF I FEEL MYSELF BECOMING...

... MORE WICKED THAN SHE COULD EVER HAVE BEEN?

I MISS HER SO. I WISH I'D HAD A CHANCE TO KNOW HER.

SHE MUST'VE BEEN A LOVELY LADY TO HAVE YOU, CARROT-TOP.

Y'KNOW, AH MISS MY FAMILY, TOO. DADDY 'N' ME'D GO HUNTIN' EVERY WINTER, 'TIL HE GOT TOO SICK TO WALK, THEN AH WENT ALONE. MY BROTHER JOSH IS NEXT OLDEST, IT'LL BE HIS JOB THIS YEAR.

WE WRITE--MOMMA, THE KIDS AN' ME--BUT IT AIN'T THE SAME AS BEIN' THERE.

YOU WANT TO COME WITH ME NEXT TIME AH GO HOME FOR A VISIT? AH BET YOU'D LIKE IT, AH KNOW THEY'D LIKE YOU.

THAT'S VERRA KIND, SAM. I'D LOVE TO.

THAT'S MY GIRL. WHATEVER ANYONE TELLS YOU, KIDDO--WHATEVER YOU THINK ABOUT YOURSELF--

--YOU'LL ALWAYS BE MY FRIEND. OUR FRIEND.

THE MASSACHUSETTS ACADEMY...

...EARLY THAT EVENING...

WE'RE INSIDE, MY FRIENDS.

AND NONE OF THE VILLAINS SEEM THE WISER.

Bullpen Bulletins

LAST MONTH . . .

I ran out of space just as I was about to describe the best part of the Marvel Editors West Coast Trip!

Monday, August 8th — We leave sunny San Diego, driving north in our four LeBaron convertibles toward Los Angeles. We, of course, are Dennis O'Neil, Larry Hama, Louise Jones, Tom DeFalco, Mark Gruenwald, Ralph Macchio, Bob Budiansky, Carl Potts, Danny Fingeroth, and Allen Milgrom — all but one of Marvel Comics editors — plus me, the Supreme High Editor in Chief. Who is missing? Archie Goodwin, Editorial Director of Marvel's *EPIC Illustrated Magazine* and *EPIC Comics* unfortunately can't join us. Boy, is *he* missing the boat! We arrive in L.A. late in the afternoon and check in to the splendiferous Chateau Marmont Hotel — an incredibly luxurious and historic Los Angeles landmark. Some of us are given luxury cottages while the rest have to settle for vast suites. Very soon after arrival, almost everyone is in the pool. We go our separate ways for dinner, but meet later to zip off to Disneyland for the evening!

Tuesday, August 9th — We rise early and virtually take over a nearby restaurant for breakfast. Then we're off to "the studio" — *Marvel Productions*, where our animated cartoons for Saturday morning are produced. Head honchos David DePatie, Lee Gunther, and, of course, Stan Lee himself welcome us! We meet with Stan for a while in his snazzy office overlooking the courtyard, and listen to him describe all the Marvel movie and TV deals that are in the works — which *he'll* tell you about personally on an upcoming Bullpen Page! Afterward, we're given an enlightening tour, and then it's *lunchtime*! What do you know, they're throwing a party for us. Famous writer Harlan Ellison happens to be there, as does Marvel alumnus Steve Gerber, who's back writing (brilliantly) for us again, by the way. We have a blast.

That evening, we attend another party in our honor — a quiet, warm, friendly gathering at Stan's incredible home high up on a mountaintop in Hollywood Hills. Stan and his wife, Joan, and their daughter Joanie make us feel like kings! What a wonderful evening, splashing around in the pool, enjoying the view, and hobnobbing with the Old Master. (Just kidding about the "old" there, Stan.)

Wednesday, August 10th — Most of us head home, but a few stay to take care of miscellaneous West Coast business. Larry and Denny are needed at the studio to consult on the G. I. Joe animated commercials. Tom and I pay a visit to some of the nice folks at Mattel, and take care of other stuff.

Friday, August 12th — Back to the Apple.

What a trip! And *that's* how we spent our summer vacation.

YES, BUT *WHY*?

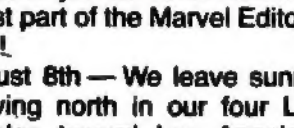
Well, all the little reasons add up — it was good for us to attend the San Diego Convention and meet the thousands of fans who attended, it was good to visit the studio and strengthen the bond between Marvel East and West, it was good to generate some publicity and good will . . . but here's the *real* reason — the editors I've gathered here at Marvel are the best comics editors in the world, bar none. They've worked their tails off for a long time now, creating new things, developing new ideas, keeping the legends soaring and making Marvel Comics greater than ever. Most of them have lost more vacation days than they've taken, and a few haven't taken a day off in years. They *deserved* a break. This trip — a little play mixed with a little work — they *earned*. And one more thing — besides being the best editors, these guys, every one, are among the best *people* I know.

There just isn't anything like relaxing and having a good time with people you love.

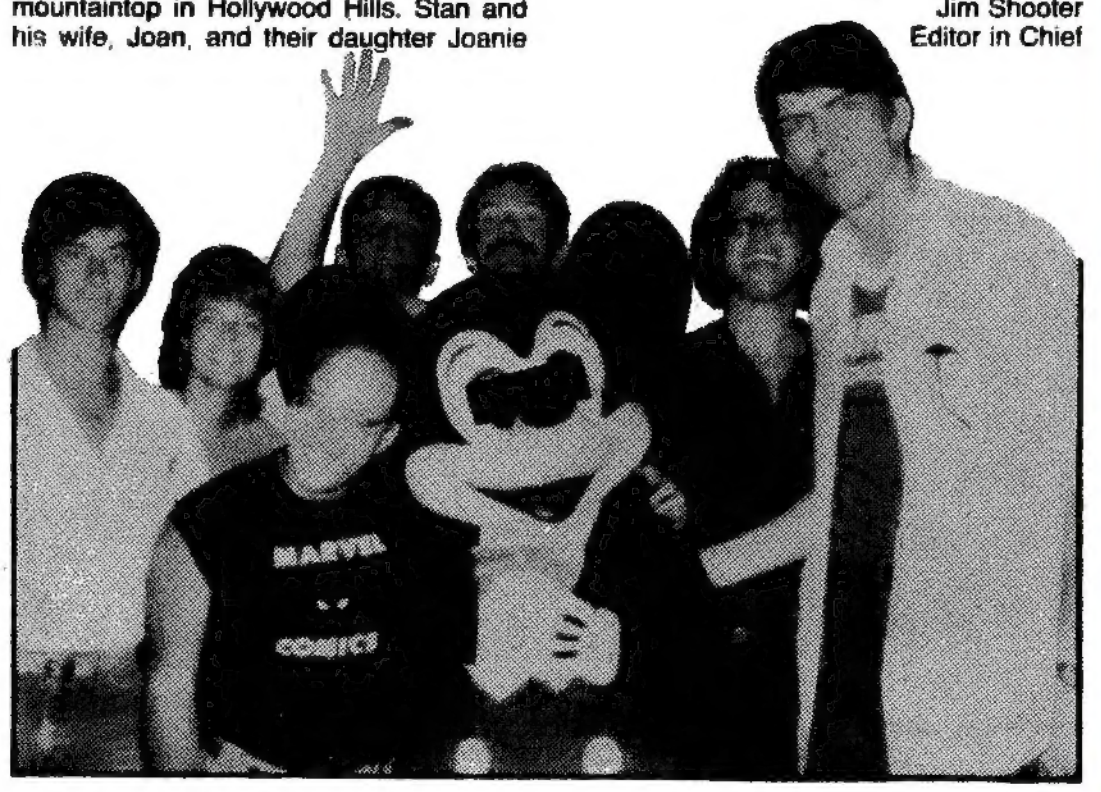
NEXT MONTH . . .

The absolutely true story of a Bullpenner's brush with death, and wait'll you hear who helped save the day. You'll swear we made it up .

Stay well!



Jim Shooter
Editor in Chief



THE HYPE BOX

MARVEL SUPER HEROES SECRET WARS #1 — The debut of this twelve-issue limited series is not only the biggest event of the month, but it's also the beginning of the most important series Marvel will publish this year! Last month, Marvel's greatest heroes and villains vanished in a blinding flash, and now begins the startling revelation of where they have vanished to! This series is destined to change the face of the Marvel Universe. When it's over things will never be the same again! Writer JIM SHOOTER (the Big Man himself) and artists MIKE ZECK and JOHN BEATTY (fresh from their stunning work on **Captain America**) have been holed up for weeks, working feverishly to make this *the* series of their careers. It takes you to a far distant galaxy, full of wonder and terrible fear, where the world's mightiest super heroes will face the greatest challenge of their lives! Here's where it all starts! So what are you waiting for? This one you cannot afford to miss.

THE MIGHTY MARVEL CHECKLIST

- ☐ **THE THING #11**
- ☐ **DAREDEVIL #206**
- ☐ **NEW MUTANTS #15**
- ☐ **CONAN THE KING #22**
- ☐ **DR. STRANGE CLASSICS #3** — The concluding chapters of this classic STAN LEE / STEVE DITKO story from **Strange Tales #136-138.**
- ☐ **MARVEL SUPER HEROES SECRET WARS #1** — The beginning of the most important series in Marvel history! See the hype box for more details.
- ☐ **FANTASTIC FOUR SPECIAL EDITION #1** — Re-presenting the classic **FF Annual #1** by STAN LEE and JACK KIRBY.
- ☐ **OFFICIAL HANDBOOK OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE #15** — The Book of Weapons and Hardware.
- ☐ **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #252**
- ☐ **CAPTAIN AMERICA #293**
- ☐ **THOR #343**
- ☐ **INDIANA JONES #17**
- ☐ **MOON KNIGHT #37**
- ☐ **MICRONAUTS #58**
- ☐ **CRYSTAR #7**
- ☐ **INCREDIBLE HULK #295**
- ☐ **AVENGERS #243**
- ☐ **CONAN THE BARBARIAN #158**
- ☐ **MARVEL TALES #163** — Reprinting "Captured by J. Jonah Jameson" by STAN LEE and STEVE DITKO, from **Amazing Spider-Man #25**
- ☐ **X-MEN #161**
- ☐ **ROM #54**
- ☐ **POWER MAN/IRON FIST #105**
- ☐ **G.I. JOE #23**
- ☐ **THE A-TEAM (Limited Series) #3** — Marvel's version of the TV smash.
- ☐ **FANTASTIC FOUR #266**
- ☐ **MARVEL TEAM-UP #141** — Featuring **Spider-Man, Daredevil** and the **Black Widow**
- ☐ **IRON MAN #162**
- ☐ **PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #90**
- ☐ **DEFENDERS #131**
- ☐ **STAR WARS #83**
- ☐ **ALPHA FLIGHT #10**
- ☐ **HERCULES (Limited Series)#3**
- ☐ **ELEKTRA SAGA (Limited Series) #4** — Concluding our re-presentation of the original Elektra epic by FRANK MILLER and KLAUS JANSON.

MARVEL MAGAZINES

- ☐ **SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #99**
- ☐ **MARVEL AGE #14**
- ☐ **MARVEL FANFARE #14**

EPIC COMICS

- ☐ **EPIC ILLUSTRATED #23**
- ☐ **COYOTE #5**
- ☐ **DREADSTAR #9**

PRETTY IMPRESSIVE.

NOT JUST THIS COMPLEX, BUT HOW WE REACHED IT.

LAVA BURNS THROUGH THE EARTH, SAM-- SO DO I.

I'LL SHIFT TO WOLF-FORM, DANI.

AS RAHNE DOES, THE UNIQUE PSYCHIC RAPPORT SHE SHARES WITH DANI...

... COMES INTO PLAY, LINKING THEIR TWO MINDS.

PROBLEMS, ILLYANA-- THERE ARE TOO MANY SCENTS. RAHNE'S HAVING TROUBLE SORTING THEM OUT.

THAT'S ALL RIGHT, DANI. I SCOUTED THE ENTIRE COMPLEX WHEN I WAS HERE IN MY ASTRAL FORM.

KITTY WAS BEING HELD IN THIS LAB NEXT DOOR--

--THERE SHE IS!

ABOUT TIME, RASPUTIN! WHAT THE HECK KEPT YOU?

THE BUS BROKE DOWN.

YOU CAME TO MY RESCUE BY *BUS?!?*

WHAT CAN I TELL YOU, PRYDE, WE'RE A CLASS ACT.

I SEE YOU BROUGHT THE BABY BRIGADE. NICE OUTFIT.

GLAD YOU LIKE IT...

...CONSIDERING IT USED TO BE YOURS.

DOES THAT CHAIR INHIBIT YOUR PHASING POWER? IS THERE A SWITCH--

LORD OF THE ABYSS!

SHE ISN'T REAL!!

A HOLOGRAM--A THREE-DIMENSIONAL ILLUSION--WE'VE BEEN *TRICKED!*

SURPRISE!

LIGHTS-- ALL AROUND US!

THEY'RE SO BRIGHT-- I CAN'T SEE !!

WELCOME, DEAR CHILDREN, TO MY PARLOR.

I KNOW MOST OF YOU BY REPUTATION ONLY-- AND SOME NOT ALL-- BUT I'M CERTAIN WE'RE GOING TO BECOME GREAT FRIENDS...

...AS *KITTY PRYDE* AND I HAVE ALREADY DONE.

FROM THIS MOMENT, YOUR BODIES BELONG TO THE *HELLFIRE CLUB*-- AND VERY SOON NOW, YOUR *MINDS* AND *SOULS* WILL FOLLOW.

IF YOU'VE HARMED KITTY, WOMAN, I'LL BRING THIS ENTIRE MOUNTAIN DOWN AROUND YOUR EARS. I'LL USE MY MAGIC TO MOVE YOUR PRECIOUS ACADEMY FROM EARTH...

...TO THE HEART OF *HELL ITSELF!*

NEXT ISSUE

MEET THE HELLIONS IN: AWAY GAME!

MINUTEMEN
Quick
STOP
RST